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Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/17, in which the Council decided to give prominence to, and raise awareness of, the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In its resolution, the Council requested the Commission for Social Development to discuss regional programmes that promoted social development through the sharing of experiences and best practices. The present report emphasizes the need to address the social dimensions of NEPAD plans of action in such areas as governance, agricultural development, infrastructure development, health and education. The report also highlights the importance of social inclusion, social protection, global partnerships and the need to strengthen data in respect of the social dimensions of NEPAD. It concludes with a set of recommendations that underscore the importance of elevating and championing Africa's social development agenda.

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I. Introduction

1. Africa has made considerable progress in a number of social development areas. The first half of the timetable for attaining the Millennium Development Goals recorded concrete gains in such areas as primary school enrolment, measles vaccination, the use of insecticide-treated bednets, as well as reductions in HIV infection rates in some countries. Progress in those areas is likely to be further consolidated if the social development dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) receive a high level of political commitment and the needed resources from Africa's leaders and their development partners. The importance of these commitments was recently reinforced during the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" and during the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals, which were held on 22 and 25 September 2008.

2. Overall progress, however, has been slow in a majority of sub-Saharan African countries and the economic and social development of Africa remains a daunting challenge. The slow pace of socio-economic development in Africa is also magnifying the potentially ruinous impact on Africa of the current global food and energy crises and the global financial meltdown. Falling or suppressed wages and heightened inequality, which have been wrought by globalization, further compound the situation. The crises are likely to have very corrosive and debilitating effects on the fight against extreme poverty and hunger and on efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to secure peace on the continent.

3. In order to be able to address the crises head on, Africa's own development programme blueprint, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development, should have a strong focus on boosting economic growth and should comprehensively address a number of social development issues. A focus on social development issues will not only complement growth but will also improve the lives of ordinary men, women and children across the continent, irrespective of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, social or other status. The issues include combating poverty and hunger, creating full employment and decent work opportunities for all, improving access to education and health-care services, promoting gender equality and social inclusion and putting in place social protection systems that address poverty, vulnerability and risk shocks. The issues are at the core of the social policy framework for Africa and the Windhoek declaration on social development, which were adopted at the conclusion of the first African Union conference of African ministers in charge of social development, held in Windhoek in October 2008.

4. In order to increase social spending for health, education and social protection and to generate the necessary revenue for financing public works projects that create jobs, African economies will have to increase the pace at which they accumulate wealth. This involves high and sustained economic growth rates since only cumulative increases in long-term growth will make African countries richer. Estimates have shown that if a country's economy grows at a rate of 1 per cent per year, it will take 69 years for that country to double its per capita income. In contrast, a country growing at a rate of 5 per cent per year will take about 14 years to double its per capita income. It is encouraging, therefore, to note that since the mid-1990s, many African economies have been able to increase their growth rates.

In 2007, Africa's real growth rate averaged 5.8 per cent, up from 5.7 per cent in 2006, 5.3 per cent in 2005 and 5.2 per cent in 2004.[1] African countries will therefore need to sustain high rates of growth in order to improve their chances of eradicating poverty on the continent.

5. The New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in July 2001, provides a vision and strategic framework for Africa's socio-economic and political development. It places the onus of the continent's development on Africans themselves. Specifically, NEPAD aims to place African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development in order to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process; accelerate the empowerment of women; achieve and sustain strong gross domestic product (GDP) growth (over 7 per cent per year); and ensure that all African countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

6. Addressing the primary goals contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome is fundamental to Africa's socio-economic development, in particular those relating to poverty eradication, job growth and fostering social cohesion. In addition, social and regional inequalities will be reduced by investing in education and health and other physical infrastructure. The social dimensions of NEPAD should therefore be guided by the principles of equal opportunity and fairness, enhancing the quality of life and well-being of all Africans and putting people at the centre of national development.

7. The present report examines the social dimensions of NEPAD and identifies actions that, if implemented, would maximize positive results, while minimizing negative ones.

II. Africa's social development needs and challenges

8. Africa's social development needs and challenges span a number of areas, including the three critical areas of poverty eradication, employment creation and social inclusion, which comprise the focus of the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the recently adopted African Union social policy framework for Africa. The African Union has also identified a number of other critical issues, including health and education, women, youth employment, social protection systems, ageing, the family, migration and mainstreaming disability in the continent's development agenda. While some of the issues are set out in the Millennium Development Goals, others are articulated in the internationally agreed development goals, including in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

9. The African Union Commission has adopted a series of measures that are designed to mainstream sound and sustainable social development in all development policies, including poverty reduction strategies. In particular, the African Union organized the first African Union Conference of African ministers in charge of social development, held in Windhoek in October 2008. The main

[1] Economic Commission for Africa, *Economic Report on Africa 2008: Africa and the Monterrey Consensus: Tracking Performance and Progress* (Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa, 2008).

objectives of the conference included adopting a social policy framework for Africa and reviewing and assessing progress made by countries in implementing the various instruments in the area of social development; identifying gaps, constraints and best practices; forging partnerships with development partners and civil society organizations; popularizing the various existing African Union instruments on social issues; and promoting the rights and welfare of the most vulnerable members of society.

10. The need to highlight these areas has occurred against a backdrop of a global economic expansion that has failed to raise most African incomes above one dollar a day. Current World Bank poverty estimates show that the number of people living below the new poverty line of $1.25 in sub-Saharan Africa has almost doubled, from 200 million in 1981 to 380 million in 2005.[2] Africa also continues to face a major disease burden, which is primarily being driven by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Africa is home to 75 per cent of people living with HIV/AIDS, while 90 per cent of all malaria deaths occur in Africa. Tuberculosis kills half a million Africans each year, mostly young men and women in their most productive years. African women are still several hundred times more likely to die as a result of maternity complications than those in developed countries. In addition, gender disparities in education are still evident in several countries.

11. The increased prospect of a global recession is likely to make the future outlook even worse. A significant impact in Africa of the global economic slowdown is likely to be a rise in unemployment in the formal sector, owing to a disruption in foreign direct investment flows. Decreased western consumer demand is likely to have an impact on African economies, including on countries that export products through such trade agreements as the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

12. Fortunately, falling oil prices have relieved concerns about the impact of high energy prices on the poor, particularly access of the poor to cheap and affordable food imports. For most poor countries that are net food importers, the decline in oil prices will help reduce inflationary pressures. However, for oil-exporting countries, a downtrend in energy prices will have a significant impact on their national budgets. In the past, some oil-exporting African countries had managed to improve their socio-economic profiles as a result of billions of dollars in revenues from oil exports: investments geared towards building new or improving existing infrastructure such as roads, clinics, hospitals and schools had shot up and concerted efforts were under way to use those resources to aggressively reduce the depth and severity of poverty and hunger. For other commodity-exporting countries, revenues from such commodities as gold, copper and timber, which had become the foundation for their leap forward, are currently shrinking as a result of the global economic slowdown. Consequently, many commodity-dependent African countries are likely to see declines in rates of economic growth and social progress.

13. Various NEPAD programmes allow countries to address poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon. For instance, NEPAD programmes address such issues as lack of participation in governance by all segments of society, including the poor and marginalized; material deprivation (food consumption, safe and adequate clean water supply); acute vulnerability to external shocks as a result of

[2] Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion, "The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty", *Policy Research Working Paper*, No. WPS 4703 (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2008).

disease, economic crises or natural disasters; and low or inadequate human capital formation (education and health). Thus, NEPAD is Africa's framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through investments in peace and security, building and fostering good governance and democracy, supporting and increasing investments in sectoral policies and mobilizing international support for implementation. Its social dimensions should therefore address the process leading to the attainment of its broad objectives. For instance, promoting community participation and listening to the voices of the poor and marginalized should be part of the process of designing and implementing NEPAD programmes and policies at local levels.

14. Fulfilling those objectives will demonstrate that NEPAD places a high premium not just on economic development and governance but also on social development. The emphasis on good governance and sustainable growth and development is crucially important if African countries are to be able to raise, invest and distribute the financial resources necessary to meet the social dimensions of development. In order to deal effectively with the social dimensions of NEPAD, therefore, countries need to realize that the overarching goal of development and good governance is to improve the lives of ordinary people and to broaden and galvanize the opportunities they have to make their lives better.

15. In order to achieve the objectives, African countries will need to raise the profile of, and delivery on, the social dimensions of NEPAD, as articulated in the African Union social policy framework for Africa. As Africa harvests and markets its commodities, it must bear in mind that the harvesting of its natural resources and the development of related infrastructure must take into consideration the social dimensions of development. African societies should also strive to meet their current needs without adversely affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. NEPAD should strengthen its focus on people-centred development. Its social dimensions should continue to emphasize universally shared development objectives, such as those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the promotion of human rights, the rule of law and the advancement of democracy by, for instance, increasing the number of countries subscribing to the African Peer Review Mechanism. Addressing the social dimensions of NEPAD will also strengthen the efforts of countries that are working hard to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

16. Africa's commitment to implementing the goals contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in particular those relating to poverty eradication, was further strengthened when the African Union organized an extraordinary summit on employment and poverty alleviation, held in Ouagadougou in September 2004. The summit adopted a declaration, plan of action and follow-up mechanism that committed member States to placing employment at the centre of development strategies.[3] In particular, the summit endorsed an 11-point action plan to reverse the current trends of pervasive and persistent poverty, unemployment and under-employment in the continent (see box 1).

[3] See African Union documents on the declaration on employment and poverty alleviation in Africa (EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/3(III)); plan of action for the promotion of employment and poverty alleviation (EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/4(III)); and follow-up mechanism for implementation, monitoring and evaluation (EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/5(III)).

Box 1

Priority areas of action outlined in the Ouagadougou plan of action on employment and poverty alleviation[a]

- Ensuring political leadership and commitment to creating an enabling environment of good governance for investment, development and poverty alleviation in the context of NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals
- Promotion of the agricultural sector and rural development, sustainable management of the environment for food security and development of support infrastructure
- Development of an appropriate framework for integration and harmonization of economic and social policies
- Improving and strengthening the existing social protection schemes and extending it to workers and their families currently excluded, as well as occupational safety, health and hygiene
- Empowerment of women by integrating them in the labour markets and to enable them to participate effectively in the development of poverty reduction strategies, policies and programmes
- Human and institutional capacity-building for public and private institutions in charge of employment promotion and poverty alleviation, including social partners and other relevant actors of civil society
- Utilizing key sectors with high employment potential to generate more jobs and allocate adequate resources for that purpose
- Building international cooperation, fair and equitable globalization and partnerships for an enhanced international support for Africa's efforts towards achieving sustainable development, putting emphasis on the employment agenda, poverty alleviation, regional integration and a better participation in the globalization process
- Promoting regional and economic cooperation among the regional economic communities in order to expand economic space, intra- and interregional trade, markets and exploit the economies of scale
- Targeting and empowering vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, aged persons, migrants, children and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases, internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and the working poor
- Mobilization of resources at national, regional and international levels

[a] See biennial report of the African Union on follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the Ouagadougou extraordinary summit (LSC/Exp/5(VI)).

III. Plans of action of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and their social dimensions

A. Good governance

17. Human development performance indicators suggest that actions taken by some African Governments have had a detrimental impact on the living conditions of their citizens. Some countries have been characterized by low levels of democracy, excessive centralization of power, institutionalized corruption and lack of adequate human rights protection, which in many cases have severely undermined the prospects for economic growth, social development and political stability.

18. Good governance is fundamental to the success of NEPAD. NEPAD is premised on the new political will of African leaders and points out that earlier attempts at continent-wide development programmes have failed as a result of questionable leadership, among other problems. Currently, the situation has changed and it is much more hopeful than it has been in the past. Democracy is spreading across the continent and the number of democratically elected leaders is on the rise. NEPAD recognizes the importance of good governance and includes initiatives on democracy and political governance and on economic and corporate governance.

19. Through NEPAD, African leaders acknowledge that good governance is essential to achieving sustainable development in Africa and pledge to promote good governance throughout the continent. The commitment has been reaffirmed on several occasions since the adoption of NEPAD, including through the 2002 Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance; the 2003 African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which came into force in 2004; and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

20. The commitment of African States has been implemented through the establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism, a voluntary self-monitoring mechanism to ensure that the policies and practices of participating States conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards. To date, 29 countries have acceded to the Mechanism, 14 have established national self-assessment structures and 7 have been peer-reviewed (Algeria, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda).

21. The African Peer Review Mechanism demonstrates the willingness of African leaders to move from the commitment stage to the implementation stage with NEPAD good governance initiatives. However, some limitations still exist. The recommendations that come out of the peer review exercise must be acted upon in order for the process to be effective; however, the good governance capacity and political will that is required to implement recommended changes may be lacking. A stronger connection with and awareness by citizens and civil society would strengthen the Mechanism by increasing the accountability of those key constituents.

22. Democracy and good governance are not ends in themselves. Rather, they are a means towards strengthening the rule of law and human rights, minimizing potential conflict situations and creating an enabling environment for the pursuit of social development policies that can address the needs of all members of society and

ensure their participation in economic, social, cultural and political life. In other words, good governance and development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Hence, the NEPAD governance programme, including the African Peer Review Mechanism, can and should promote social development causes and priorities by ensuring that strong and transparent institutions of governance adequately serve both the public and private good. This will promote pro-poor growth, poverty eradication and the participation and civic engagement of the poor. In addition, good governance will improve the international competitiveness of African businesses by attracting investments and strengthening policies that promote economic growth, employment creation and social inclusion.

23. Strong institutions enhance the ability of economic policies to attract and foster private-sector investment and job growth. By putting in place predictable rules and securing land and property rights, strong and transparent institutions can nurture the development, growth and competitive edge of micro, small and medium-size enterprises and transform them into the main drivers of socio-economic growth on the continent. These enterprises make significant contributions to social and economic development, irrespective of whether they operate in the formal or informal sectors of the economy. They constitute the largest number of business establishments in a majority of African countries.

B. Agricultural development

24. Close to 470 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas, 65 per cent of whom work in agriculture.[4] Agriculture and household food security are therefore critical drivers of Africa's development prospects, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

25. In order to give greater attention to agriculture, food security and nutrition, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. At its core, the framework aims to address the chronic food production gap and hunger crisis in Africa. It notes that agricultural development can play a special role in combating poverty; improving the continent's human development indicators, in particular those relating to children and women; increasing rural incomes; and advancing the goal of full employment and decent work for all in Africa. Because of its labour-intensive nature, agriculture has a tremendous potential to not only absorb large numbers of people but also to improve the quality of life of the rural population by boosting rural incomes and diet.

26. Despite its promise and the key role that it could play in development, however, African agriculture has been neglected over the last two and a half decades. A number of factors are at the root of this neglect. First, many African countries continue to devote only about 4 per cent of total public spending to agriculture instead of the 10 per cent that was called for by the 2003 Maputo Declaration on agriculture and food security in Africa. Second, official development assistance (ODA) directed at the agricultural sector has been declining since the 1980s. It is estimated that ODA

[4] World Bank, *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2007).

devoted to productive investments in agriculture in Africa rose from $1.2 billion in 1975 to about $3.2 billion in the 1980s and has since declined to about $1.2 billion.[4]

27. The neglect has had a debilitating impact on the lives of the rural and urban poor. Thousands of children across Africa are losing their learning potential as a result of stunted physical and intellectual growth. These developments have also led to social and political unrest in some countries. The problems are likely to worsen as a result of recent spikes in food and energy prices. The World Bank estimates that close to 100 million people could be pushed back into extreme poverty, while the number of malnourished would increase by 44 million to reach a total of 967 million worldwide as a result of the global food and energy crises.

28. To reverse these trends, African countries need to significantly scale up investments in agriculture as called for by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, as well as launch a green revolution in Africa. Recent actions by the World Bank to double agricultural lending to sub-Saharan Africa over the next year to $800 million and $50 million in commitments from the newly established multi-donor trust fund of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme should help to improve crop productivity.

29. However, a substantial increase in resources is required to fill the other significant gaps in African agriculture and rural development that are holding back the continent from being a major agricultural producer in the world. First among these is the need for African countries to increase the share of their national budgets allocated to agriculture, in particular meeting the 10 per cent budget allocation to agriculture by 2008 as agreed under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.[5] According to the African Union, only six countries have reached the 10 per cent target of public expenditure on agriculture. Second, African Governments will need to invest more in rural areas where more than 65 per cent of the population lives. In addition, in order to increase agricultural productivity, Governments and their development partners should consider investing in appropriate agricultural technologies, education, rural infrastructure and rural institutions, as well as address land tenure issues, taking into account the situation of such marginalized populations as pastoralists. If African farmers are given the opportunity to learn appropriate water harvesting and farming techniques, and have access to subsidized fertilizers and seeds, as well as genuine national and developed market access to their agricultural products, they will be able to guarantee their own food security and lift themselves out of poverty.

C. Infrastructure development

30. Investing in infrastructure has positive social development spin-offs. Besides bolstering rural-urban and regional connectivity, which is essential for the movement of goods and services and the development of domestic markets, investing in NEPAD infrastructure programmes will also improve access to roads, schools, health-care services and water and sanitations services for all sectors of society, especially the poor, women and marginalized groups who often live in inaccessible areas. More importantly, infrastructure developments have tremendous potential to improve productivity, fight unemployment and raise the standard of

[5] See decision EX.CL/Dec.431 (XIII) of the Executive Council of the African Union.

living. Downstream, investments in infrastructure will generate the development of small and medium-size enterprises, with an enormous potential to create jobs for unemployed women, youth and other socially excluded groups. The construction and maintenance of highways, roads, bridges, ports, dams and airports is labour intensive, in particular at a low-skill level. In addition, infrastructure development will help Africa to better leverage globalization to its benefit through trade facilitation and regional integration.

31. Infrastructure development also offers a great opportunity to mainstream gender and youth issues. Rural road rehabilitation and urban infrastructure repair projects all offer opportunities to bolster the participation of women and youth in the infrastructure labour market. Opportunities for business creation by women and youth can also be found in projects such as water and energy distribution and information and communications technology. These projects have the potential to create a significant number of new jobs. In order for these goals to be realized, however, men, women and youth will need literacy and skills training, access to credit and microfinance and a voice in project design and implementation. Governments will need to involve civil society organizations that have a strong presence in local communities and have the ability to mobilize women and young people.

32. Although there has been marked progress in implementing both the short-term action plan and the medium- to long-term strategic framework of the NEPAD infrastructure programme, implementing the infrastructure programme will require a substantial increase in investments from public-private partnerships, as well as aid from the donor community. The MDG Africa Steering Group estimates that $52.2 billion per year will be required in public and private investments to address the continent's infrastructure bottlenecks. This is a large amount of money, which, if properly channelled, can stimulate substantial job growth across the continent. The current global financial crisis, however, threatens to worsen aid volatility and undermine resource commitments to Africa.

D. Health and education

33. In order for African economies to grow and diversify their export base, African Governments will need to make a priority of their human capabilities. This will require investments that improve access to universal primary health-care services and primary and secondary education.

34. Health concerns remain a significant barrier to social development in the region. According to the recommendations of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group, in most African countries the basic health infrastructure needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals on child mortality, maternal health and infectious disease is lacking. As a result, sub-Saharan Africa accounts for about half of the deaths of children under 5 years of age in the developing world. Many countries in the region made no progress in reducing childhood deaths between 1990 and 2006.[6] It is, however, promising to note that significant progress has been made in the prevention of measles, a major cause of childhood deaths. The proportion of 12-23 month-olds receiving at least one dose of measles vaccine increased from 56 per cent in 1990 to 72 per cent in 2006 in sub-Saharan Africa.

[6] United Nations, *Millennium Development Goals Report, 2008* (New York: United Nations, 2008).

35. Very little progress has been made in reducing maternal deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1990, 920 maternal deaths occurred for every 100,000 live births. By 2005, that number had declined negligibly to 900, 100 times the rate of maternal death in developed regions. Improved reproductive health care, including skilled health workers at delivery and access to emergency obstetric care, is essential for reducing maternal deaths.

36. Social development has been further hampered by the high disease burden the continent bears resulting from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. The vast majority of those living with HIV/AIDS are in Africa. In 2007, 67 per cent of all those living with HIV/AIDS were in sub-Saharan Africa and the region accounted for 72 per cent of all AIDS deaths.[7] Tuberculosis is on the rise in the region. Between 1990 and 2006, the number of tuberculosis cases increased from 352 to 521 per 100,000 people (excluding people who were HIV positive).

37. With regard to education, several African countries are on track to achieve universal primary education. Primary education enrolment rates have increased from 54 per cent in 1991 to 71 per cent in 2006 in sub-Saharan Africa. The progress can be attributed in part to such important policy changes as free primary education, school feeding programmes and the Education for All Fast Track Initiative global partnership. Despite significant progress in the region, the total net enrolment ratio still remains well below the average of 88 per cent for all developing countries. The quality of education also needs to be improved. Only one quarter of children of secondary school age in sub-Saharan Africa are in secondary school; 34 per cent are enrolled in primary education.

38. In his report entitled "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" (A/63/130), the Secretary-General highlighted important commitments in the health and education sectors made by African countries. African countries have pledged to increase health budgets to 15 per cent of public expenditure (according to the 2001 Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases) and to increase education budgets to 20 per cent of public expenditure (according to the recommendations of the 2002 Dar-es-Salam Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States and Education for All Fast Track Initiative guidelines). Most African countries have established national mechanisms to coordinate the fight against HIV/AIDS, and 18 countries have implemented action plans to address the control of tuberculosis. With regard to malaria, African countries have committed to implementing the joint United Nations/World Bank Roll Back Malaria programme, launched in 1998. Clearly education is a key priority within the continent, reflected in the adoption of the two action plans on the first (1997-2006) and second (2006-2015) decades of education for Africa and the broad implementation of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative in the region.

39. Although many African countries are making notable progress in education, there is growing concern that some of the continent's best trained professionals will continue to leave for rich countries as a result of low wages and limited employment opportunities. While it can be argued that African countries subsidize the formation of skills that might be lost to the brain drain, it can also be argued that sending

[7] Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, *2008 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic* (Geneva: UNAIDS, 2008).

countries also obtain positive returns from the brain drain. Hence, efforts aimed at the better management of migration should include national efforts that focus on improving educational opportunities as well as commensurate increases in quality employment opportunities. Special efforts should be made to address the brain drain through improved opportunities for full employment and decent work for all. Improved opportunities for technical and vocational training and employment for young people should also be a top priority.

IV. Conclusions and the way forward

40. African countries should not look at social policy as welfare policy or as a residual system of safety nets that serve to mitigate and counteract Africa's chronic crop failures, macroeconomic policy failures, health epidemics, environmental disasters and other external shocks. Rather, they should look at social policy as an essential pillar of development in its own right and a productive investment. Such a view and broader perspective will ensure equitable and socially sustainable development and will allow countries to institute, for example, systems of social guarantees that deal with issues of access, quality of services, financial protection and participation.

A. Political commitment and public policy

41. African Governments should be firmly committed to promoting the social dimensions of NEPAD and should take specific steps and initiatives to use its programmes with that aim. At the country level, Governments will need to: improve or change what they produce and export by making serious commitments to invest in the skills and health of workers; create an enabling environment that attracts and allows private capital to grow; and foster a new spirit of entrepreneurship. Developed countries will also need to agree to a new set of trade rules that support the efforts of African countries.

42. In order to promote good governance, the African Peer Review Mechanism will need to have a stronger connection to two key constituencies: the citizens in whose name it is being undertaken, through outreach by Government, media and civil society; and the wider African and international community. The peer review exercise will also need to be followed up with concrete political actions. Greater awareness of the Mechanism and its process among both civil society and the private sector would foster greater public accountability and encourage Governments to deliver on promises and plans.

B. Social inclusion

43. In the area of social inclusion, NEPAD programmes should strive to foster a world where all social groups, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, have access to productive assets, such as land and credit, educational opportunities, social protection, health-care services and political decision-making. These groups should also have access to markets that guarantee fair and just returns on their hard work and investments.

44. If NEPAD policies and programmes mainstream the objectives of social inclusion, as enunciated at the World Summit on Social Development and in the African common position on social integration, adopted at the first African Union conference of African ministers in charge of social development, Windhoek. African countries will strengthen the abilities of socially marginalized groups to improve the well-being of their children, families, communities and, ultimately, their countries. More importantly, policies that foster social inclusion have tremendous potential to maximize development efforts since they harness the abilities and resources of all citizens irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, language or other status. Inclusive societies that are based on equality of lifetime opportunities and non-discrimination offer the best hope for a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

C. Social protection

45. Social protection measures, such as cash transfers and pensions, are critical to facilitating access by all social groups to adequate food and shelter, health, education and decent employment opportunities. The need for social protection systems that encompass those areas has been magnified by the recent food and energy crises and by the global financial meltdown, which have had a negative impact on the lives of such vulnerable groups as women, children, and the elderly. The impact of the crises underscores the need to strengthen existing national social protection systems and implement new ones where they do not exist, taking into account the unique circumstances that exist in each country.

46. New and increased public spending on social protection programmes will also help to blunt the corrosive effects of rising unemployment, poverty, inequality and vulnerability to climate change. As called for by the first African Union conference of African ministers in charge of social development, African countries should adopt and implement an African regional social policy framework, the goals of which would include employment, social protection, health, education, disaster prevention and mitigation. Social protection is also needed to allow for adequate protections in an era marked by increasing job insecurity and globalization. Extending coverage to all should be considered a priority when implementing NEPAD programmes, including national and international strategies to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and to create decent jobs for the rural and urban poor, women, youth and immigrants.

47. This can be done within the framework of a basic social protection floor. Such a social protection plan will give practical meaning to human, social, economic and political rights. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), it is feasible to put in place a floor consisting of: a basic old-age pension plan; child support grants that are conditional on school attendance; a minimum health-care package focused on the big killer diseases; basic skills development and labour intensive infrastructure programmes. The ILO estimates that in some African countries, a basic package of modest pensions and child benefits could reduce the poverty head count by 40 per cent, at a cost of 3-4 per cent of GDP.

D. Strengthening of data

48. In order to strengthen their capacity to manage the social dimensions of NEPAD, African countries must be able to measure the issues that they desire to

manage. African statistical systems will therefore need to be strengthened, as called for by the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, which aims to build the capacity of countries to manage results. There is a need to have a well developed framework for social statistics that will have, at its core, specific and well-defined social concerns that are of universal importance, such as population, health, education, employment status, housing, land ownership and core economic resources. In order to be effective, the framework should adhere to agreed international standards and have for each social concern an accompanying statistical data collection system that includes relevant concepts and definitions, recommended topics, defined periodicity and sources of data. Collected data would also need to be disaggregated by age, gender, and geographical levels.

E. Global partnerships

49. Although the global financial crisis endangers financing for development, it should not lead to a failure of countries to live up to the aid commitments they have already made. Existing commitments must be honoured. In particular, international cooperation, including the commitment of developed countries to target 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for ODA is essential for reaching NEPAD social development goals, the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Failure to fulfil existing commitments might cause some countries to experience a backslide in terms of social development, human rights and the maintenance of peace and security. However, the implementation of NEPAD priorities should continue to be the primary responsibility of African Governments themselves. The private sector, civil society organizations and international development partners should augment those efforts. In particular, the international development community should collaborate and support Africa in implementing its social development agenda.

V. Recommendations

50. **The Commission for Social Development may wish to consider the following recommendations:**

(a) **In order to comprehensively address the social dimensions of NEPAD, the ministries or Government agencies dealing with social development issues should work closely with other relevant line ministries, particularly those dealing with education and health. The involvement of civil society organizations and the private sector in the design, implementation and evaluation of social development goals should also be a top priority;**

(b) **Social justice, equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all should be promoted and protected, including the democratic participation of marginalized groups;**

(c) **The creation of effective employment strategies should be promoted by placing full employment and decent work at the centre of economic policies, while extending appropriate skills development and education to displaced workers, persons with disabilities, women, youth and other marginalized groups;**

(d) African Governments, with support from the international community and the private sector, should take concrete actions to address the region's chronic poverty and hunger by launching an African green revolution within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme;

(e) African countries need to adopt and implement broad-based social protection policies to mitigate and counteract Africa's chronic crop failures, macroeconomic policy failures, health epidemics, environmental disasters and other external shocks;

(f) Social policies should address issues of social exclusion and vulnerability. A practical approach should be taken to expand basic social protection based on country-specific conditions, with the cooperation and participation of development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector;

(g) Empowerment of women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups, through access to productive resources, including land, credit, education, health care, clean water and sanitation and other social services, should be an integral part of comprehensive social policies;

(h) Education, employment opportunities and social protection should be expanded for youth. Such policies will mitigate the incidence of crime and substance abuse among young people and improve their self-esteem;

(i) African countries should honour commitments to improving health. They should live up to their pledge to increase health budgets to 15 per cent of public expenditure. The 2001 Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases commits States to introduce a national strategy for tuberculosis. Countries that have not done so yet should develop national strategies for tuberculosis. To comply with commitments made through the 2000 Abuja Declaration and the Plan of Action on Roll Back Malaria and the recent African Union health strategy for 2007-2015, African countries should take action at the regional level to ensure implementation, monitoring and management of the Roll Back Malaria programme;

(j) Efforts to improve both enrolment and quality of education should be intensified. The creation of a skilled workforce and retention of capacity for development should also be a high priority;

(k) Africa's development partners should live up to the commitments they have made to international development cooperation to complement the efforts of African countries.